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CONFEDERATE STATES STAMPS

IN an old scrap-book in his office, says *The News*, of Savannah, Georgia, Judge Thomas J. Sheftall has a collection of Confederate stamps that is curious and valuable. There are fifty-three of them in all. Some are rather crude executions and none are perforated. The Confederate postmasters surely had a hard time cutting off the number required by the purchaser. One of the most valuable stamps in the collection is the one of Greenville, Ala. This stamp is about an inch long and half an inch wide. On its face, printed in blue ink, are the words: "Paid; five; Greenville, Ala." This stamp is not engraved, only some fancy scroll doubtless found in a country printing office, adorning it. The regular Confederate States stamps of almost all denominations are in the book. These all contain the picture of Jefferson Davis, and are all engraved. The twenty-cent stamp is a light green, with a full face of Davis. There are two five-cent stamps in the collection—one a light blue, the other a dark green—each containing a full-face picture of Davis. There is a poorly engraved stamp in this book of the Richmond city post. The chief ornamentation is two cannons with three cannon balls—symbols of a war period, surely.

The Selma, Ala., five-cent stamp is printed in red ink, with a shield in the centre containing a big "5," with a "5" in each corner. Above and below the centre five are two stars, and over the star the words "C. S. Postage," and under the star, in a curved line, "Selma, Ala." The Savannah postoffice issued a stamp larger than those usually used. In the centre is the State seal. Over the seal is "Savannah P. O.," and under it "Ten Cents." The whole is surrounded by a fancy border, and the stamp is printed in blue ink. The Nashville postmaster must have been very proud of his position. His name occupies more of the stamp than anything else. The stamp is of the three-cent denomination. Over a big "3" are the words, "W. D. McNish, P. M.," and under the figure, "Nashville." A neat border surrounds the words. The stamp is red and is one of the neatest in the collection. The stamp issued by Athens, Ga., was valued at ten cents. There are two colors of these in the collection, one a dark red and one a dark blue. Each contains twelve stars situated in a circle and surrounding the words, "paid 10." This stamp also contains the postmaster's name—"J. C. Crawford, postmaster, Athens, Ga."—surrounding the stars.

The Macon stamp is a small one, being only about a half by a quarter of an inch. The body is red and the printing is blue. The stamp in the collection is of the two-cent denomination. The words on the stamp are "postoffice 10c. Macon, Ga." The whole is surrounded by a deep blue border. The five-cent stamp of Macon is similar to the two-cent stamp, with the exception of the color, the ground of the five-cent stamp being green. Some of the postmasters were so anxious to see their names on the stamp issued that they left out the postoffice entirely. One, a large engraved specimen in blue, has a circle in which appear the twelve stars and in the centre of which is a large "two" with the word "cents" engraved through it. Under the circle is the name of the postmaster, M. C. Callaway. There is no town mentioned at all, and the Confederate States is entirely ignored. Another stamp, a little one with a deep green border, is valuable because there is no postoffice on it. The words on it are "three cents." Not a word as to what country it belonged to, from where it was issued, or anything that could give information is printed on it.

Mobile, Ala., issued a two-cent stamp that was not by any means pretty. The engraving is crude, and as the stamp is printed in black ink it does not show up well. A star is in the centre, with the figure 2 set in the star. Between the points of the star are different figures. Between the two top points are men looking over the points. Two upright female figures ornament the space between the other points. The twenty-cent stamp of New Orleans is a rather good piece of work. In the centre is engraved a head, supposed to represent Jefferson Davis. The stamp is printed in purple ink on a white background, and is altogether one of the prettiest in the collection. The Judge has two blockade postage stamps, each of the value of a dollar, one printed in blue and the other in brown. The stamps are very large, and a heavy border indented with square blocks runs entirely around the edge. Within the border is "Confederate States, N. A." Inside the border is "Blockade Postage to Europe. One Dollar."

At the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in the Print Department, is now being held an exhibition of the works of Frans Hals the elder, Frans Hals the younger, and Velazquez, in carbon photographs, engravings and etchings, and seven copies in oil by F. P. Vinton.

LINCOLN'S WAR TELEGRAMS

AT the War Department in Washington is preserved, in a stout leather binding, a priceless collection of autograph war telegrams written by Abraham Lincoln. Although the collection covers only the last year of the war and of Lincoln's life, the first telegram being dated March 10, 1864, and the last April 12, 1865, this volume contains almost all the autograph war telegrams of the great President which were preserved by the Government. It would be thought that every telegram President Lincoln wrote with his own hand during the war, and sent through Secretary Stanton's remarkable telegraph office in the War Department, would have been carefully kept for posterity. Yet, with a very few exceptions, the 383 of that last year are all that can be found. And these, I believe, were not purposely preserved, but were dug out of a mass of old records and documents, where accident seems to have placed them. They are, however, now kept with scrupulous, almost with sacred, care.

The telegrams are written on square sheets of white-ruled writing paper, almost all headed in neat, plain printed script, either "Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C.," or, "Office United States Military Telegraph, War Department, Washington, D. C.," though now and then you come to one for which Lincoln wrote the heading, "Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C." About half a dozen of the telegrams are in the handwriting of either Col. John Hay or Mr. John G. Nicolay, but all the rest are in the familiar handwriting of President Lincoln himself—a plain, legible, lawyer-like hand which seems unhurried. Invariably his signature is "A. Lincoln." Over the more important telegrams in Lincoln's hand is the word "Cypher"—the old spelling being used throughout—as instruction to the telegraphers to turn its contents into the military telegraph code. There are few erasures or interlineations, but many abbreviations. Of course, the volume does not contain all the telegrams Lincoln wrote even during that period, but there is at least one for almost every day, and taken together they are a fair record of the last year of that inscrutable man who revealed himself as much in these brief messages as in anything else that he said or did. It is, in a sense, his diary—the only one there is at all events. In it we read in his own handwriting his acts and aims, his hopes and fears, the manifestation of his shrewdness, kindness, humor, courage and patriotism during the closing twelvemonth of his life.

THE FIFTH AVENUE AUCTION ROOMS

THE alterations and extensions which have been made during the summer in the Fifth Avenue Auction Rooms, at 238 Fifth avenue, have transformed that formerly somewhat restricted establishment into one of the most perfect places of its kind in the city. To the front apartment, which is lighted from the avenue and by reflectors, has been added a rear gallery, almost square, with an admirable arrangement of skylights, and a height of upwards of twenty feet. This gallery is large enough to receive any ordinary collection of pictures, and to light them well upon every wall. The offices have been established at the right, in the space between the front and the rear gallery. The finish of the rooms is in rich and simple wood and wallwork, admirably calculated to set off the effect of the objects exposed for sale, while the floor space is of such amplitude that collections of furniture, etc., can be shown to the best advantage. The artificial lighting is by the J. P. Frink system, whose adoption for the art department of the Chicago Exposition was noted in the last issue of this paper.

Mr. William B. Norman, who is almost the last left to us of the great auctioneers of this city who have made their profession noteworthy, remains in his seat of honor in the new as in the old Fifth Avenue Auction Rooms. His genial countenance, which time sets no marks upon, and his quaint and epigrammatic utterances, as well as his inviolable honesty in his profession, have drawn to him the confidence of auction buyers throughout the country, while to those who sell, his mere word is a guarantee as solid as a bond. The location of the Rooms is fortunate, and under such guidance the future of the establishment should be highly prosperous. The season has already been opened with some notable sales of rugs, furniture, etc., with other sales in this line and of pictures to come.

One of the most interesting exhibitions in connection with the recent Orientalist Congress in London is a collection of tools used by workmen in building the pyramids of Egypt. They were gathered and are exhibited by the illustrious Egyptologist, Mr. Flinders Petrie. These utensils indicate that ancient workmen had an astonishing acquaintance with many tools which we have been accustomed to consider essentially modern. Among the exhibits are solid and tubular corundum-tipped drills, and straight and circular saws, and chisels described as "not a bit inferior to those now used."